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Item 4 (j) of the provisional agenda*
Items for information: follow-up to Economic and Social Council policy decisions

Policy decisions of the Economic and Social Council that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission

Note by the Secretary-General

Summary

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-seventh session,[a] the present note was prepared to brief the Commission on policy decisions of the Economic and Social Council adopted in 2006 that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission. The note furthermore indicates the actions taken and proposed to be taken by the Commission and the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in an effort to respond to the requests made by the Council. The note also contains a section for information on the recent decisions taken by the General Assembly with a view to reform the Economic and Social Council. The Commission is invited to take note of the brief contained herein.

* E/CN.3/2007/1.

[a] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2006, Supplement No. 4* (E/2006/24), sect. I.A.

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Contents

		Paragraphs	*Page*
I.	Follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits	1–5	3
II.	Strengthening statistical capacity	6–7	4
III.	The 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses	8–9	4
IV.	Mainstreaming gender perspectives	10–14	5
V.	Reform of the Economic and Social Council	15	6

I. Follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

1. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/44, regarding its role in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, decided to continue to promote the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, bearing in mind the need to respect the thematic unity of each of the conferences and the interlinkages between them, and welcomed the progress made in their review of their working methods by several functional commissions and subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council during their 2006 sessions. The Council also decided to replace the individual joint bureau meetings with one meeting of the chairs of the functional commissions and the Economic and Social Council to be held at the beginning of each calendar year, making use of teleconferencing whenever possible.

Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division

Methods of work

2. In preparation for its 36th meeting in 2005, and in compliance with the request of the Economic and Social Council, the Bureau of the Statistical Commission conducted a detailed review of the working methods of the Commission (E/CN.3/2005/2). The Commission took note of the suggestions made by the Bureau and implemented some procedures on a trial basis during the thirty-sixth session. It further analysed the experiences and took them into account in the preparation for the thirty-seventh session (E/CN.3/2006/2). The Commission has found the procedures satisfactory and it is continuing to implement them.

Meeting of the Chairs of the functional Commissions

3. The Economic and Social Council has invited the Chairs of all functional commissions to a meeting to be held on 15 January 2007. The Statistical Commission will be represented at the meeting by its chair, Mr. Calvillo Vives (Mexico).

Development indicators

4. Ever since the Economic and Social Council invited the Statistical Commission to serve as the intergovernmental focal point for the review of indicators used by the United Nations system for the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (see Council resolutions 1999/55 and 2000/27), the Commission has been discussing the technical aspects of development indicators annually.

5. At its current session, the Commission is considering a report of the Secretary-General describing the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goal Indicators in 2006 in the following areas: improvement of

coverage, transparency and reporting for all indicators as presented in the database on all Millennium Development Goals; review of methodologies related to the agreed indicators; coordination of data collection at the global level; coordination and support to countries in the compilation and analysis of indicators at the national level; and preparation of the yearly analysis and reports on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (E/CN.3/2007/13).

II. Strengthening statistical capacity

Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

6. The Economic and Social Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution on strengthening statistical capacity put forward by the Statistical Commission at its thirty-seventh session, without further change, as its resolution 2006/6. The resolution calls on various actors to undertake specific actions with the objective of strengthening national statistical capacity.

Actions taken and proposed by the Commission and the Division

7. At its current session, the Commission is considering a report (E/CN.3/2007/12), in accordance with its request to the Secretary-General, made at its thirty-seventh session to report on the implementation of the resolution on strengthening statistical capacity, adopted by the Economic and Social Council, in July 2006. The report provides an overview of the work undertaken in 2006 by the Statistics Division and by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators to support national efforts in building and strengthening national statistical capacity

III. The 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses

Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

8. In its resolution 2006/6, the Economic and Social Council also recalled its resolution 2005/13 of 22 July 2005, in which it noted the critical importance of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses to meeting data needs for the follow-up activities to the international conferences and summits, including the Millennium Summit.

Actions taken and proposed by the Commission and the Division

9. At its current session, the Commission is considering a report (E/CN.3/2007/3) of the Secretary-General summarizing activities completed in response to the requests made by the Commission with regard to the implementation of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses. The report also briefs the Commission on the finalization of the revision and update of the United Nations

Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses[1] and the coordination with regional activities in the preparation for the 2010 round of population and housing censuses.

IV. Mainstreaming gender perspectives

Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

10. In its resolution 2006/36, the Council, reaffirming its agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, recalling its resolutions 2001/41 of 7 July 2001, 2002/23 of 24 July 2002, 2003/49 of 24 July 2003, 2004/4 of 7 July 2004 and 2005/31 of 26 July 2005 and reaffirming also the commitment made at the 2005 World Summit, noted with appreciation the progress and continued efforts made by entities of the United Nations system to address gaps between policy and practice in mainstreaming a gender perspective in their respective fields of work, including through the development of training, methodologies and tools.

11. In its resolution 2006/9, the Council decided that each year the Commission on the Status of Women would discuss ways and means to accelerate implementation of the previous commitments made with regard to the priority theme through: (a) an interactive expert panel to identify key policy initiatives in order to accelerate their implementation; and (b) an interactive expert panel on capacity-building on gender mainstreaming in relation to the priority theme, based on an exchange of national and regional experiences, lessons learned and good practices, including results with supporting data, where available, with the participation of technical experts and statisticians. The Council further decided that each year the Commission on the Status of Women would evaluate progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions on a priority theme from a previous session through an interactive dialogue among all States and observers to identify means to accelerate their implementation, focusing on national and regional activities in support of the implementation of the agreed conclusions, including, where appropriate, supported by reliable statistics, sex-disaggregated data and other quantitative and qualitative information to illustrate monitoring and reporting, and requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission, on an annual basis, a report on the priority theme including proposals for possible indicators, elaborated in cooperation with the Statistical Commission, to measure progress in implementation with regard to the priority theme.

Actions taken and proposed by the Commission and the Division

12. Gender mainstreaming is reflected in the range of development indicators considered by the Commission in the context of follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration and United Nations conferences and summits, which is covered under item 3 (k) of the provisional agenda of the current session. The Division is responsible for coordinating the preparation of statistics for the

[1] Statistical Papers, No. 67/Rev.1 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.XVII.8).

Millennium Development Goal indicators. The database on such indicators maintained by the Division contains data broken down by sex to the extent possible.

13. Members of the Statistical Commission have in the past participated in joint panel discussions with the Commission on the Status of Women, taking advantage of the fact that both Commissions are in session simultaneously. A joint panel discussion is again tentatively planned for noon on Thursday, 1 March 2007. The priority theme for the 2007 session of the Commission on the Status of Women is "The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child". The planned theme for 2008 is "Financing for gender equality and empowerment of women". The Bureau of the Statistical Commission will work with the Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women to elaborate practical proposals on how cooperation between the two Commissions with respect to the elaboration of possible indicators can be organized.

14. Another relevant statistical activity is the publication entitled *Progress of the World's Women 2005: Progress in Statistics*, which was disseminated at the end of 2005 by the Statistics Division. The publication highlights the availability of gender statistics and assesses progress made in the area over the last 30 years (available at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/indwm/ww2005_pub/English/WW2005_text_complete_BW.pdf).

V. Reform of the Economic and Social Council

15. The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, recalled the 2005 World Summit Outcome; recalled also its resolutions 45/264, 50/227, 52/12 B, 57/270 B, 59/250 and 60/265; recalled further its resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005); reaffirmed the role that the Charter of the United Nations and the General Assembly have vested in the Economic and Social Council and recognized the need for a more effective Economic and Social Council as a principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development, as well as for implementation of the international development goals agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Development Goals; reaffirmed also the commitments to and emphasized the need to fully implement the global partnership for development set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and to enhance the momentum generated by the 2005 World Summit in order to operationalize and implement, at all levels, the commitments set out in the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the 2005 World Summit, in the economic, social and related fields; reiterated that the Economic and Social Council should continue to strengthen its role as the central mechanism for system-wide coordination and thus promote the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences in the economic, social and related fields in accordance with the Charter and relevant General Assembly resolutions, in particular, resolutions 50/227 and 57/270 B; decided that the Economic and Social Council should hold annual ministerial-level substantive reviews as part of its high-level segment and also decided that such reviews should be conducted by means of a cross-sectoral

approach focusing on thematic issues common to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, including the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals, review progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of those conferences and summits and their follow-up processes and assess its impact on the achievement of the goals and targets of the conferences and summits; and in this regard: (a) recommended that such reviews provide an opportunity for countries to make voluntary national presentations; (b) requested the Council to urge the functional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies and follow-up mechanisms, as appropriate, to contribute, in accordance with their mandates taking into account their specificity, to the assessment; (c) recommended that the Council establish a multi-year programme of work for the ministerial-level substantive reviews; and (d) invited the organizations of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, to contribute, within their respective mandates, to the consideration by the Economic and Social Council.